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tion, that in the Political Retrospect pages 501—503, hopes were expressed “of another revolution taking place in France, with all the horrors of the last.” I have read over these pages, and find nothing in them, which will bear the construction of this prejudiced writer, who is a fit companion for the party-editor who so readily gives a place to his malevolent compositions, with a truly congenial malignity of disposition. Neither writer nor editor need be afraid of receiving *your praise*, for fallen indeed you must be, if you would praise such wretched effusions of bigotry, illiberality, and misrepresentation. Let the editor of the News-Letter undisturbed continue to advertise gratis your Magazine, and instead of cursing as he designs, really confer an advantage by turning public attention towards you.

No BIGOT.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

HOWEVER general the objection to the proposition may be, I hesitate not to assert my belief, that thanksgiving for peace, and prayers on behalf of the success of war, are links of the same chain. The former as well as the latter appear to me necessarily to imply the idea that the Deity is the mover, promoter and carrier on of war. Whereas nothing can be more erroneous. It entirely owes its origin to the base intrigues, selfish designs, and evil passions of men, in direct contradiction to every just sentiment, and right apprehension of the attributes of the Supreme Being. Man makes war of his own accord; it is his own act and deed, he may cease from it or he may prolong its continuance just in

the same manner as it is in his power respecting the practice of every other evil habit. Were not this the case he would not be a free agent, nor accountable for the actions of his life. We involve ourselves and one another in the miseries of war, To this wrong purpose how many devote their time and their talents. Every nerve is strained, every faculty is called into action, and existence is wasted in accomplishing purposes for which thousands are made to mourn. The world is inundated with the crimes of rapine and slaughter, and to add to the iniquity of our proceedings, appeals are frequently made to the Deity in behalf of the justness of our cause. We prolong the contest or terminate the struggle as occasions arise that we fancy will give permanency to our unjust acquirements, or add to the stock of our own aggrandizement. Therefore, to give thanks on these occasions is in my opinion, tacitly to acknowledge that the business of war is not ours, but entered into, carried on and terminated, at the will and express instance of the Deity. Were this the case, man would not be accountable for the evils its continuance occasions in the world. Thus destroying at once our own accountability, for the crimes of which we ourselves have been the immediate cause.

But throwing aside all these considerations, to what purpose is all this ostentatious parade of public fasts and public thanksgiving. It has only the appearance of devotion, without the reality. I can perceive no influence it has on our general line of conduct; we are not made better by their observance. I fear they have rather a contrary tendency, by fostering a spirit of pride, and by inducing mistaken views of ourselves. We think by conforming

to these, we have done quite enough, and imagine we are better than we really are; but it is a vain and presumptuous idea that conforming now and then to a few external forms, will atone for the errors of our lives. In vain we proclaim fasts and appoint days of thanksgiving. They will not be accepted at our hands, so long as they remain unaccompanied by the fruits of genuine religion, which consists not in specious appearances, formal professions, or fond reliances on creeds and ceremonies, but in the dedication of the heart, practically devoted to the ceasing from evil and learning to do well.

Though many are loud in this profession of godliness and pompously assume the appearance of sanctity, the tone and the temper of their lives evidently manifest the insincerity of their hearts. They betray the cause they pretend to take in hand to support, and barter for a few selfish considerations the part they should take in promoting the great and common cause of equity and justice.

How can we reconcile our high professions of religion, and loud demonstrations of joy in favour of peace with the limited views we are taught to entertain of the nature and magnitude of those great principles of justice, mercy, and truth, which should in every particular form the rule for our conduct. These last I fear, constitute but a small part of the code of morality with many who perhaps are loudest in their praise. With many too, to whom from their calling we are led to look up as consistent examples of those amiable and essential qualities, unbiassed by the dread of censure, or hope of preferment.*

* I appeal to the fact that in the small town where I live, four clergymen of the

With some, nay with a numerous class these times of rejoicing and thanksgiving are only seasons of hypocrisy and dissimulation. They would rather war should continue. It is to them a gainful trade. They embrace the opportunity it frequently offers of entering the field of speculation and indulge largely in this hazardous course, the probable success of which principally depends on the continuance of war. They therefore dread a change taking place lest it might prove a severe and deadly crush to their splendid and speculative hopes of emolument. War also affords employment to the sons of many of our gentry who vainly and idly suppose that a military calling is more honourable than that of a merchant, a farmer, or a tradesman. With these different classes of the community it cannot be supposed that demonstrations of joy, or giving of thanks on the present occasion can be attended with any degree of sincerity. I think they would rather rejoice at the prospect of war. However this may be the case, the real friends of peace do indeed rejoice that a termination is at length put to the late cruel and bloody conflict, but still they have much to regret, and in many instances very little cause of rejoicing.

N.S.

For the Monthly Belfast Magazine.

A FEW WORDS ON THE SUBJECT OF
THE SLAVE TRADE; ADDRESSED
TO THE WOMEN OF IRELAND.

church of England, refused lately to sign a petition in favour of the abolition of the African slave-trade. Is this doing as they would be done by? Or is it a proof of the increasing justice, and growing liberality of the times?